

REMARKS

In this paper, claims 1, 3, 4, 9, 13, 15 and 18 are currently amended, and claim 17 has been canceled. After entry of the above amendment, claims 1, 3-16 and 18 are pending, and claims 2 and 17 have been canceled.

The applicant appreciates the indicated allowability of claim 17. The subject matter of claim 17 has been incorporated into both claims 1 and 13. As discussed below, the added description of the spline should make all claims allowable.

Claims 1, 3-12, 15 and 16 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112 as being indefinite. This basis for rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the spline originates from and extends radially inwardly from an innermost peripheral surface of the sprocket body that forms an adjacent radially outwardly extending spline. The spline includes a radially outer surface facing radially outwardly, wherein the radially outer surface of the spline faces the innermost peripheral surface of the sprocket body when viewed perpendicular to the rotational axis. In the disclosed embodiment, the radially outer surface (520) (Fig. 6(B)) of composite spline (516x) faces the radially innermost surface (524).

Claims 1, 3-11 and 13 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Militana (US 3,168,836). This basis for rejection is respectfully traversed.

As noted above, claim 13 has been amended to include the subject matter of allowable claim 17, so it is believed that claim 13 is now allowable.

Claim 1 also has been amended to include the subject matter of claim 17. While it is still believed that the examiner's interpretation of the word "spline" is unreasonable, the amendment has been adopted to facilitate the disposition of this case.

Militana discloses a sprocket (20) comprising a core (22) and a wear rim (24). Core (22) includes a hub (26) with an opening (28) that fits on the end of a vehicle drive shaft. A plurality of spider arms (30) extend radially outwardly from hub (26), and a hoop (32) is disposed on the ends of

spider arms (30). Wear rim (24) has an inner periphery (33) that is dimensioned to fit on the outer periphery of hoop (32) with a sliding fit so that wear rim (24) may be removed and replaced easily from core (22).

Militana neither discloses nor suggests a spline that originates from and extends radially inwardly from an innermost peripheral surface of a sprocket body that forms an adjacent radially outwardly extending spline, wherein the spline includes a radially outer surface facing radially outwardly, and wherein the radially outer surface of the spline faces the innermost peripheral surface of the sprocket body when viewed perpendicular to the rotational axis.

Claims 1, 3-5 and 10 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by Lim, et al (US 2001/0039224). This basis for rejection is respectfully traversed.

Lim, et al discloses a freewheel (15) for a bicycle. Freewheel (15) includes an outer tubular body (17) that supports a plurality of sprockets (21-27). Sprocket (21), for example, includes a splined inner peripheral surface that engages a corresponding splined outer peripheral surface of outer tubular body (17). A plurality of sprocket teeth are disposed circumferentially around the outer peripheral surface of the sprocket body, and a plurality of oval-shaped openings are disposed circumferentially around the middle portion of the sprocket body.

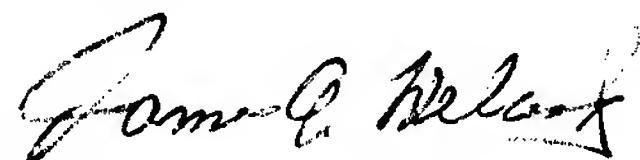
Lim, et al neither discloses nor suggests a spline that originates from and extends radially inwardly from an innermost peripheral surface of a sprocket body that forms an adjacent radially outwardly extending spline, wherein the spline includes a radially outer surface facing radially outwardly, and wherein the radially outer surface of the spline faces the innermost peripheral surface of the sprocket body when viewed perpendicular to the rotational axis.

Claims 12 and 14 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Militana. This basis for rejection is respectfully traversed for the same reasons noted above. Furthermore, simply reciting that two side wall portions have the same thickness indicates nothing about what that thickness is, so it cannot be said that any increase in strength and rigidity of the sprocket body would occur. In fact, in the disclosed embodiment, the thicknesses T1w and T2w of

the side walls, while equal to each other, is less than the thicknesses of the other portions of the sprocket, so clearly no increase in strength or rigidity occurs from that configuration.

Accordingly, it is believed that the rejections under 35 U.S.C. §102, §103 and §112 have been overcome by the foregoing amendment and remarks, and it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of this application as amended is respectfully requested. Allowance of all claims is earnestly solicited.

Respectfully submitted,



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